

## The War Paper for Women

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

VOL. IX. (Third Series), No. 410.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1916.

Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free) 14d.

## NO WOMEN NEED APPLY!



**SKILLED WOMAN CHAUFFEUR:** "And I am disqualified because I am a Woman!"

(It is stated that discharged taxi-cab drivers, convicted of drunkenness and using bad language, are to be taken back by cab owners on account of Scotland Yard's refusal to license women for the purpose. See page 127.)



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Our Children's Party takes place to-morrow (Saturday), and all our friends and members who are fond of children and remember the pleasure they themselves used to take in a

An enjoyable social evening was held in the Borough Hall on December 18. Thanks are due

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE.
Our Cartoon .. .. .	121
United Suffragists .. .. .	122
The Outlook .. .. .	123
Sir John Simon's Resignation .. .. .	123
Our View of the Premier's Pledge .. .. .	124
War Work for Women. By F. W. .. .. .	125
President Wilson and Woman Suffrage .. .. .	125
The Hospital Scandal. By T. O'Meara .. .. .	126
Comparison of Punishments .. .. .	127
The Taxicab Muddle .. .. .	127
Women in the Honours' List .. .. .	127

## DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

## THE OUTLOOK

By the appointment of Mr. Herbert Samuel to the Home Secretaryship, Mr. Asquith has added an Anti-Suffragist to his Cabinet. This is a matter of real regret at the present time, not only because the question of Woman Suffrage stands a strong chance of being raised over the forthcoming Government measure to reform the Parliamentary register, but also because the relations of the Home Office to the factory system place in the hands of the Secretary of State a power over the conditions of women's labour that should properly be vested only in one who sympathises with the wider and more modern conception of woman's sphere. The executive of the United Suffragists, realising this, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on the subject last week, which we reproduce on this page.

## Compulsion and Government by Consent

An interesting letter appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, last Monday, over the signature "Colonial." It was written by an Australian now on active service over here, and in it he makes almost the same point as we made in our leading article last week—that conscription can only be properly construed as "government with consent" when it becomes law in a Parliament that really represents the people. He says in effect:—

It is because Australia and New Zealand are true democracies .. . that they have accepted a measure of conscription willingly. Have the people of Great Britain such freedom? I submit .. . that they have not—very far from it. There can be no true democracy without the full political freedom of universal adult suffrage—one man one vote, and also one woman one vote. If conscription seems to this free colonial to constitute an injustice to men who enjoy only a limited franchise, how much greater must be the injustice that is suffered by women who have no votes at all!

## Employment After the War

What will probably be the greatest social problem ever faced by this country—the re-instatement of labour after the war—is to form the subject of a conference at the Guildhall on January 31. The meeting is announced as under the auspices of the National Patriotic Association and the London Chamber of Commerce, and all trades and trades associations are to be represented. As this is a matter of vital importance to women, whose whole industrial position has been thrown into the melting pot by the war, we look with considerable anxiety for some assurance that women's interests are to be guarded at the proposed conference. The announcement that the meeting will be "thoroughly representative of the Empire" does not reassure us as much as might be expected, for we know from long experience that the Empire is taken as consisting entirely of males when anything is to be gained by being a member of it. Far more encouraging to women is the resolution to be moved at Bristol on January 25, by the Women's Labour League, advocating that every wage-earning woman displaced at the end of the war to make room for a man who has returned to his ordinary work, or because war work has been brought to an end, shall be employed on useful work for the community at a reasonable wage until she is able to find employment in the ordinary labour market.

## The Wrong Sort of Economy

We are glad to see that the *Manchester Guardian* emphatically denies that economies on education are economies at all. It calls upon "some member of the House of Commons to procure a complete return of all these so-called economies in the United Kingdom and then to subject them to the criticism which they deserve." It goes on to point out, as we have done on more than one occasion, that we should be "steadily building as well as we can against the uncertain future, and educate the young not worse but better than those who have gone before them." Miss Margaret Ashton, who has just been penalised for her opinions by a reactionary City Council at Manchester, made a very fine speech, last Friday, at a meeting in London of the Association of Teachers of Domestic Subjects, on the real thrift that is being shown by working-class mothers to-day. These women, according to her experiences in Manchester, are really building against the future by seeing that the better wages now being earned are being spent largely in providing clothes, boots and food for the children, while the savings banks are doing "a roaring business." We hope that all those who talk of the "extravagance" of women who, for the first time in their lives, have money to spend on something other than bare necessities, will make a note of this tribute paid to them by Councillor Ashton.

## An Important White Paper

One of the most interesting White Papers issued since the outbreak of war is the report, which has just appeared, of the Committee on the Health of Munition Workers. The appointment of a woman "welfare supervisor," in all Government and controlled factories where women are employed, is strongly recommended; and no one who has closely followed the details of the recent rush of women into war work can fail to recognise the importance of this recommendation. The improper behaviour on the part of foremen, the unsatisfactory hygienic and sanitary conditions, the breakdowns or accidents following upon long hours and overstrain—all these and other matters of equal importance are mentioned by the Committee as reasons for the appointment as soon as possible of women supervisors. In many cases, too, such an official would be able to act as mediator between the women and the employer, where recourse would otherwise be had to the Munitions Tribunals. In this connection, we cannot help regretting that, whatever qualifications Mr. Seeborn Rowntree may possess for the post, some competent woman should not rather have been appointed by Mr. Lloyd George to assist Lord Murray in problems arising out of women's employment in munition factories.

## The "Irish Citizen"

Everyone admires a gallant fighter, and the fight put up by the *Irish Citizen* since the outbreak of war (and before), against all the forces of reaction represented by the Anti-Suffrage point of view, can truly be described as gallant. So we share the regrets of its courageous Editor, Mr. Sheehy Skeffington, and of Suffragists in Ireland generally, that our weekly contemporary will be forced in future to appear only monthly. We know only too well from our own experience how difficult it is to keep ideas alive and ideals untarnished in this difficult time; and the stampede of so many supporters of our movement away from Suffrage immediately on the declaration of war has made the task none the easier for those who have stood firm and kept the Suffrage Flag flying. It is impossible, without increased financial support, as the *Irish Citizen* pointed out in its editorial last week, to maintain a weekly issue in the face of rising prices for paper and printing, and if that increase of support is not forthcoming there is no alternative but to reduce the number of issues. We need hardly add that all our wishes for the re-appearance of this brave little Suffrage paper as a weekly organ, at the end of the war, go out to our Irish colleagues in the great movement we are proud to uphold together.

## Items of Interest

Speaking at Taunton on the employment of women in agriculture, Lord St. Audries said farmers must make up their minds to pay a fair wage. This is better than advocating, as so many do, the employment of children on the land, on the plea that adult labour cannot be had.

Women have now become sweeps. One would hardly have supposed, as Scotland Yard appears to think, that sweeping chimneys involves less "unpleasantness" for women than driving taxicabs.

Women are said to help in repairing the boots of our soldiers "at the back of the front" in France. Women seem to be occupied everywhere in joining together what war has torn asunder.

Another discoverer of Woman! Mr. Jardine, M.P., speaking of the way women have saved Nottingham industrially by taking up other work when lace-making ceased, said recently: "I have always been an Anti-Suffragist, but the women have served their country so magnificently that after this I shall support giving them the vote."

Women chemists are daily becoming more in demand; and a new society of women gardeners has been formed to revive the old village industry of medicinal herb culture, in order to meet the threatened shortage in the supply of drugs.

Women municipal clerks have been doing such good work at Hammersmith that the Borough Council has increased their salaries by 5s. a week. We wish women's work, when good, were always rewarded in this practical manner instead of being made merely the subject of fulsome sentiment.

## SIR JOHN SIMON'S RESIGNATION

The following letter was sent to the Prime Minister, last Friday, from the office of the United Suffragists:—

To the Right Honourable H. H. Asquith, M.P.

Dear Sir,—In view of Sir John Simon's resignation and the consequent necessity for appointing a successor to him in the Home Office, I am instructed by my Committee to bring to your notice the strong feeling existing among our members that the Secretary of State for Home Affairs should be a man who is not opposed to the claims of women for a wider environment and a more extended sphere of activity in the State. These requirements, which were satisfied by the late Home Secretary, become even more insistent with regard to his successor, who will have to deal with the ever-increasing strain put upon the working of the Factory Acts by the influx of women into new trades and occupations, and who will therefore require the discrimination and fairness of judgment as between men and women (when the interests of both conflict) that we think are most likely to be found in one who believes in the political and industrial equality of men and women.

Also, in view of the fact that the recent Parliament and Registration Act was introduced by the Home Secretary, we feel that the interests of women, for which we as a Society stand, can only be properly safeguarded in the forthcoming Bill to reform the existing Parliamentary Register by the presence of a Minister at the Home Office who can be trusted to put forward the claims of women and men in their just proportions. An assurance from you that this point of view will be duly considered in the choice of Sir John Simon's successor will do much to establish confidence in the rank and file of our membership at this time of peril and uncertainty.

Your many recent pronouncements in praise of the war service of women must be our excuse for pressing upon you, at the present critical moment, the claims of that indispensable, yet defenceless, section of the people who, for lack of political power, depend so much upon the personnel of Government departments for protection in the conditions under which they labour.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) BARBARA AYRTON GOULD  
January 7, 1916. (Hon. Secretary).



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FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1916.

## OUR VIEW OF THE PREMIER'S PLEDGE

(A Speech which Mr. Asquith will not deliver in the course of the debates on the Compulsion Bill.)

Mr. Speaker, Sir,—

I have noticed in the controversy—a very interesting and stimulating controversy—which has transpired—perhaps I should not be accused of using an unduly provocative expression if I said that the controversy has raged—over the proposals of the Government for the compulsory enlistment of single men—I have noticed in that controversy (honourable members will correct me if I am wrong) an insistence upon one aspect, a serious and indeed a vital aspect, of the whole matter under consideration. That aspect is this: that, whatever may be said—and a great deal has been said—upon one side of the controversy and upon the other side of the controversy, at any rate all members of this House—yes, and all citizens of the Empire—(cheers)—are united in the conviction that, if there is one thing more than another which is required of a British Prime Minister, alike by honour and expediency, it is that he should keep his pledges. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) This House expects of its leader, and justly expects, that if he pledges his word he will keep his word—will keep it (if honourable members will pardon the novelty of the expression) in the spirit and the letter. This, I am glad to say, is the expectation which has governed the debates on the measure now before the House. Those who support the measure point out that it was introduced in fulfilment of an undertaking that married men who attested under the Derby scheme should not be called up until the young unmarried men of the country—provided these latter had not already enlisted in such numbers as to leave over only a negligible minority—until the young unmarried men of the country had been brought in by one means or another. Those who oppose the measure point out that the pledge stipulated for the examination of the figures before legislation should be taken upon them: they point out that the number of eligible unattested single men was to have proved not negligible, to fulfil the requirements of the pledge: they point out that that number has not proved to be either negligible or not negligible, because nobody knows what that number is. There are even those, Sir—let us give the devil his due—(laughter)—who suggest that the pledge ought never to have been given at all, and the members who hold this view propose, as I understand them, that I should resign the high office which I hold: an office in which I flatter myself that I still enjoy the confidence of my Sovereign—(cheers)—and of the people. Sir, resignation is said to be the cure of all earthly evils; but there is one evil—to my mind a necessary evil—which I have never been able to consider with even an approach to the bare idea of resignation—and that is my tenure of the Premiership.

(Laughter and cheers.) But my point, Sir, is this. Whatever divergence of views may exist, and properly and honourably exist, among honourable members as to the best means of fulfilling the pledge which I have given, there is, at any rate, absolute unanimity of opinion on one essential: it is agreed on all hands with absolute unanimity that the word of a British Prime Minister is inviolable. (Cheers and counter-cheers.) A pledge may be right or it may be wrong; but, once it has been given, it must be adhered to with every circumstance of rigidity and with every exactitude of scrupulosity. A Prime Minister who gives his word pledges more than himself: he pledges the honour of the Empire. He must keep his word if he can, he must resign if he cannot; in either case and under all conditions, he must preserve unstained that sacred tradition of unsullied honour with which the very name of Briton is inseparably connected. Allow me, Sir, to remind the House of some past history bearing on this point. I will ask honourable members to cast their minds back to the days before the war. In those days there was, if my memory does not play me false, a movement in favour of the enfranchisement of women. It fell to my lot from time to time to give pledges in connection with that movement. I say frankly that I take some pride in the recollection that I never shirked in any particular this arduous and onerous duty. After the so-called Conciliation Bill of 1911 had obtained in this House a majority of 167, I felt bound—I will go further, I will say I felt called upon—to take notice of the fact that this was a larger majority than had been obtained for any of my own Government's measures. I met the situation, Sir, as I venture to think all such situations should be met—with a pledge. I promised that in the following year facilities should be given for the Conciliation Bill to pass through all its stages in this House. Sir, those facilities were never given. The occasion for them never arose. I had given a promise, I had re-affirmed that promise with the assurance that I would keep it in the spirit and the letter. If I may borrow the picturesque phrase of my right honourable friend the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, I "torpedoed" the Conciliation Bill to which I had promised facilities. Now, Sir, it is an inextinguishable principle of English public life that one promise should be as soon as possible replaced by another. Having torpedoed the Conciliation Bill by the announcement of the Manhood Suffrage Bill, I promised that this latter should be so drafted as to admit of a Woman Suffrage amendment. Some sections of the supporters of Woman Suffrage suggested that the Bill would not be so drafted. My right honourable friend the then Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that this was an imputation of deep dishonour which he declined even to discuss. "No Government," he said, "could commit such an outrage on public faith without forfeiting the respect of every honest man and woman in the land." Sir, the Bill was not drafted so as to admit of a Woman Suffrage amendment. Did I take any steps to make up to those who had accepted my pledge for the disappointment they suffered in the breach of it? I did not. Did I resign? I did not. I recall these facts to illustrate the central theory upon which the Parliament, the Press, and the public of this vast—(I will go further, I will say this mighty—) Empire are so wholeheartedly at one. A Prime Minister's word is his bond—except when it is given to women. Will any honourable member get up in this House and suggest that even now it is not too late to redeem the pledges of those few years ago? No, Sir. And why? Because, Sir, women have no votes. (Loud and prolonged cheering, during which the right honourable gentleman resumed his seat.)



# WAR WORK FOR WOMEN

## In Industry and Commerce

The British manufacturer, whatever his particular brand of politics, is the most conservative of creatures in the management of his business. A conservative attitude may have many advantages in peace time, but it certainly does not meet the demands of a great war. It has hindered the work of the country in many directions for months past, and it is largely responsible for the serious delay in introducing women into commercial and industrial life to take the place of men called to the colours. Certain operations and processes have for years been in the hands of men, others have been reserved for women, and it has taken months to convince the manufacturers that in many instances the demarcation is purely arbitrary. With some striking exceptions, employers have steadfastly refused until recently to try the experiment of putting women on to men's work. As long as male labour in any form could be obtained, they used every device in their power to put off the evil day. They employed old men, and invalids, and men who had been out of work for years, and when these failed, they worked their employees overtime until there seemed a danger of an all-round collapse through overstrain. At this stage the most advanced made a virtue of necessity and took on women; but the more conservative pleaded to be allowed to employ school-children, and, when they were told to try women, they said that the work was either too skilled or too heavy, or that they could not accommodate women in their factories, or they gave some other equally convincing reason. Consequently, for the first six or nine months of the war very little use was made of women. A large register of women willing to do war work was compiled, but only a small fraction of those who registered succeeded in finding places. A well-educated girl applied for the post of ticket collector on a railway, and was told that influence was necessary to obtain such a post. Other women applied to be allowed to replace men on farms, and found that they could only secure employment, if they were willing to do ordinary housework in addition to the outside farm work; women with University degrees asked to be allowed to replace men in the Civil Service, and were offered posts at 25s. a week, rising to 30s. a week in exceptional cases. Many other similar examples could be given. As long as male labour in any form whatever could be obtained, employers would not give way. It was only as, in one industry after another, the supply of male labour utterly failed, that they finally capitulated. In the vital trades this happened comparatively soon; in the subsidiary and luxury trades only recently.

### Output Greater than Men's

In the metal trades, for example, women have been used freely on men's work for many months past. Large numbers have been taken on in the National shell factories, which have been established all over the country, and at least one of these factories is entirely staffed by

women. Articles are continually appearing in the daily Press and in trade journals describing the extraordinary skill and energy shown by these women. Far from their output being much less than that of the men, in many instances they have, even in this short time, equalled and passed the male rate. The Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions said in the House of Commons on December 15 that his department had been deeply impressed with the amount as well as the character of the work which was being turned out by women in munition factories.

Women are now being largely used to replace men in all types of commercial and clerical work. For example, they are being employed, in many places for the first time, as bank clerks, accountants, accountant's clerks, in insurance offices, and in certain Government departments; to replace men in grocer's and provision shops, and in certain departments of draper's shops; as waiters in clubs and restaurants; and as substitutes for boys and men in delivering milk, bread, and all kinds of goods from retail shops.

### New Openings for Women

The large railway companies are now using women as carriage cleaners, booking office clerks, ticket collectors, and light porters. The tramway companies in many provincial towns have used them as tram conductors for some months, and, in a few cases, are training picked women as drivers. Only quite recently, however, have women tram conductors been introduced in London. When it was suggested, some months ago, that the experiment might be tried, the Commissioner of Police demurred on the ground that the trams were often very overcrowded, and that in consequence women would not be able to collect fares and keep order. It appears to have been overlooked for several months that there are many routes on which the trams are never overcrowded, and that for many hours a day on even the busiest routes the cars might almost be described as empty.

In the textile trades women have taken over more and more the work they used to share with men, but as yet comparatively few have been put on to new work. For many months now there has been a real shortage of piecers in the cotton trade, and it has been suggested that women might help with this work; but there has been a determined opposition to this on moral grounds. It is said that the women would have to wear knickers, as skirts would catch in the machinery.

In almost every trade a certain number of women are now engaged on men's work, but with the exception of the trades already mentioned, and the clothing and chemical trades, the number is not very large. According to what appears to be an inspired paragraph in the *New Statesman*—some weeks ago—the total number of women replacing men in all industrial occupations was less than a quarter of a million, and it is probable that the total number for all occupations—clerical, commercial, &c., as well as industrial—is now not more than half a million. This may seem a large number when looked at from one point of view; but when it is remembered that upwards of three million men have left civil occupations to join the army, and that the shortage of male labour has been given as an excuse for all manner of shortcomings for many months past, it seems that with

a little foresight much more might have been done in this direction.

### Late Again!

A series of conferences is being held at this eleventh hour at the Home Office to consider the conditions under which women shall be admitted to various occupations to replace men who have joined the colours. But why was not all this done months ago? When women should be busily at work maintaining our commercial and financial position, conferences are being held to discuss the conditions under which they shall be admitted to the trades in question. And we have to thank the conservatism and prejudices of the British manufacturer for this state of affairs.

F. W.

### REFORM OF THE REGISTER.

The following letter was sent last week to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, and the Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party by the Women Writers' Suffrage League:—

To the Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister, House of Commons.

Dear Sir,—On December 1, 1915, the Committee of the Women Writers' Suffrage League sent a protest to you against the rumoured change of the present franchise qualification contained in the Parliament and Registration Bill.

In answer to this, on December 2, we received a letter from you saying that "the Bill in question will not provide for any change in the existing franchise."

We are therefore amazed to hear that this question is coming up shortly. On behalf of the Women Writers' Suffrage League we beg you to consider the justice of including women in the Bill that your Government is promoting for diminishing or abandoning the residential qualifications for male voters.

While we sympathise with the claim that men serving the country should not by reason of their absence lose their right to exercise the franchise on their return, we must point out to you that the claim of women is far more urgent, inasmuch as no length of residence or contributions to the resources of the country in labour, wealth, or personal service are now allowed to qualify any women for the rights of citizenship.

(Signed)

FLORENCE FENWICK MILLER (President).

MADLINE GREENWOOD (Hon. Secretary).

MARGARET WYNNE NEVINSON (Hon. Treasurer).

January 5, 1916.

### PRESIDENT WILSON AND WOMAN SUFFRAGE

On December 6, at the time of the opening of Congress, President Wilson and about a hundred members of Congress received a deputation of 300 women who were members of the Congressional Union. They came to urge upon him the importance of the Federal Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, whereby the sex bar in politics would be removed; and the President, although saying it was too late to include Woman Suffrage in his Presidential Message, showed some indication of a more friendly attitude towards a national amendment than he has hitherto admitted. His actual words were as follows:—

"All I can say with regard to what you are urging at present is this: I hope I shall always have an open mind, and I shall certainly take the greatest pleasure in conferring in the most serious way with my colleagues at the other end of the city with regard to what is the right thing to do at this time concerning this great matter. I am always restrained, as some of you will remember, by the consciousness that I must speak for others as well as for myself so long as I occupy my present office, and therefore I do not like to speak for others until I consult others and see what I am justified in saying."



# THE HOSPITAL SCANDAL

By T. O'Meara

The Report on Hospital Accommodation in England and Wales, recently published by the Local Government Board, gives the total number of beds available for the whole population as a trifle over four per thousand, and this includes all the Poor Law infirmaries. The Labour Year Book, making a similar calculation, adds the comment that "this is one of the worst scandals of the twentieth century," which appears, under the circumstances, a mild comment.

## What the Shortage Means

For what it means is that thousands of people, in urgent need of skilled medical or surgical treatment, can never obtain it, or can only obtain it after weary weeks on the waiting lists, during which time they are getting steadily worse, and their ultimate chances of recovery less hopeful. It means, also, that those who can be admitted into hospital must be turned out to make room for still more necessitous cases, as soon as they can be moved without imminent risk of a fatal collapse on the doorstep. They figure in the annual hospital reports as "discharged cured," but the best they can hope for is a costly and tedious convalescence at home, and the overworked insurance doctor will not bless his colleagues on the hospital staff for handing over their job, half-done, for him to finish, especially as he will probably be held accountable if anything goes wrong. Yet it is most unfair to blame the hospital staff for this state of affairs. The marvel is that they do so well, considering the appalling and quite unnecessary difficulties they have to contend with. Visiting surgeons at all voluntary hospitals give their services free, and find their reward in the credit and satisfaction they receive when their cases turn out well. They strongly resent having half this reward filched from them because they must work under cramped, crowded, and hurried conditions. Nurses, too, often complain bitterly that their patients have no sooner turned the corner nicely than they have to go back again to the slums or the mean streets, the noisy, unventilated bedroom, the unsuitable food, and the well-meaning but ignorant care of relatives. The very large class of cases known as "minor operations" are especially to be pitied. They have, as a rule, to suffer a great deal of subsequent pain and discomfort, and there is no accommodation for them in hospital at all. They come in to be "done" without even taking their clothes off, and are sent home as soon as the immediate effects of the chloroform have passed away.

## Intensified by the War

And if the normal condition of things is "one of the worst scandals of the twentieth century," what is it this year, when the military and naval authorities have claimed a considerable proportion of the beds in every hospital, large or small? It is no disparagement to the excellent work done by the V.A.D. nursing homes to say that they have neither the accommodation nor the training to deal with serious surgical cases; these must be sent to the nearest properly equipped hospital, and the civilian patients must suffer even more than usual. But what a capital thing it would be if, when the war is over, some of those places which have won such a deservedly high reputation in the capable hands of the V.A.D.'s could carry on their good work as maternity homes, or small hostels for delicate children or infirm elderly people. So

many of the devoted volunteer nurses will be extremely unwilling to leave their posts and return to the dull old social round once more; and there is so much, so very much, for them to do, even in peace time. But this, of course, would not solve the whole hospital problem, which is one of national size and national importance. No real reform can be looked for while the poor patients remain entirely dependent upon the fluctuations of public sentimentality and the death-rate amongst wealthy philanthropists. The mendicant position of our hospitals to-day is a disgrace to everybody concerned; for, though private charity may be a sweet and lovely thing, organised charity covers a multitude of sins. I wonder how many of my readers are acquainted with the Irishman's story of the bad man who demanded admittance to Heaven on the ground that he had once given twopence to a blind man. "An' St. Pether, he looks him up, and he looks him down; an' he pulls a bit of a face; an' he puts his hand in his trouser pocket, and he takes out twopence, an' ses he, 'Faith, if that's all, take your twopence and go to hell!'"

No doubt the majority of donors to our hospital funds are perfectly sincere in their liberality, but now and then there is unmistakably one who may expect precisely that sort of reception from St. Peter. And it is very unfair to the really generous and charitable that there should be no means of distinguishing the two types.

## The Tyranny of the Patron

Moreover, the actual task of collecting the annual sum required for each institution absorbs a scandalous amount of valuable time and energy, yet popular benevolence must be continually tickled by some fresh and piquant appeal, or there will be a heavy drop in income, and possibly the compulsory closure of a ward in consequence. No one can guess the perpetual exasperation of the present system, both to the doctors and nurses, if they are at all keen on their work, and anxious to pursue it without frivolous handicaps and interruptions. That inquisitive interfering patron who must not be offended! That terrible enforced parsimony which must aim first at a balance-sheet which will please the eye of the patron aforementioned, and which must therefore economise at any cost—at the cost of the nurses' food, at the cost of the nurses' salaries; even at the cost of such obvious necessities as bed-mackintoshes and towels.

I know all that can be said against national and local administration. It has this supreme advantage, none the less—it is constantly subjected to a vigorous fire of outspoken criticism. Anybody can attack it with impunity, and nobody ever hesitates to attack it. It is very bad indeed for any public institution to be sacrosanct. It gives no liberty, for criticism is not stifled, it is only driven underground and rendered spiteful and unjust. It gives no security from petty tyranny. The Town Councillor who might have a say in the management of a municipal hospital, already has a say in the management of a voluntary one, in his capacity as governor or member of the committee—a position in which he is practically unassailable. It gives, of course, no security whatever against maladministration; it is much to the credit of hospital officials that maladministration occurs so seldom. Above all, it does not give that feeling of security to the patients which they would enjoy if, whenever they felt themselves neglected or unfairly treated, they

could say, "I'll tell my big brother the voter about you!" The workhouse has got its bad reputation largely because the inmates have been always drawn from a class which has no voting power whatsoever, direct or indirect; but this would not be the case with hospital patients in "their own" local hospital.

## Origin of the Voluntary System

The only reason why the care of sick persons was not originally made a national charge was its ancient association with certain religious orders. These orders were long since dispersed, and a supremely important question remains in an unsettled and ignoble state of suspension, with all the disadvantages of national control and none of the corresponding advantages. Most hospitals would indignantly repudiate the idea of working for profit, realising, quite rightly, that when profits come in at the door efficiency is apt to slip out of the window (as, alas! it has slipped out of the window of many six guinea per week nursing homes); but, after all, cadging for a profit is not much more honourable. Assuredly when women have the full power to tackle this problem, it will be one of the first problems they will tackle. I think they may even tackle it before they bring forward those taxes on bachelors and State pensions for matinee idols which haunt the fertile brain of the imaginative "Anti."

## CORRESPONDENCE

### "Chivalry"

To the Editors of VOTES FOR WOMEN.

Dear Editors,—In reply to Mr. Beanland's letter, published in your issue of to-day, I would assure him that I meant no disparagement of his interesting pamphlet when I pointed out a few of the more controversial details in it. We are fated to differ in our interpretation of Mr. Kipling's ballad; it is unfortunately true that he has occasionally "voiced the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon" in a way which has taxed the devotion of his warmest admirers; but that poem always seems to me a spirited and manly, if rather boyish, assertion of the profoundly true principle of equality between gentlemen fairly matched in sport or war, and this principle, according to Mr. Beanland's own estimate, lies at the root of all true chivalry. When I spoke of the Japanese Samurai, I confess I was only speaking by hearsay, as I have never been to Japan; but I wonder if Mr. Beanland is at all familiar with the books of Mr. Yoshio Markino, especially that very charming volume entitled, "When I was a Child," which gives an unforgettable picture of one Samurai household thirty years ago? That certainly does suggest that the wife and mother was by no means a negligible person, and that even the geisha girls—subject of so many vulgar Western jokes—received their meed of justice and decency from the Japanese gentleman who let his little son run down to play with them and recite to them, in the certainty that he would learn no harm from them, and that they would teach him none. It is true that all these pleasant people were quite untouched by Christianity; it is only since Japan's partial conversion that she has become an industrial nation with the woman coal-heavers toiling at Nagasaki.

In any case, whilst entirely agreeing with the greater part of Mr. Beanland's pamphlet, I doubt if this is exactly the right moment to expatiate upon the superiority of Western (and Christian) ideals, as opposed to those of our gentle and philosophic brethren in the East. Suppose somebody should begin to quote "By their fruits shall ye know them"?—Yours, &c.,

YOUR REVIEWER.

January 7, 1916.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

"Finland and the Finns." By Arthur Reade. (London: Methuen. Price 10s. 6d. net).  
"Matilda and Marcus." By Mary Richardson. (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co. Price 6s.)



## COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

## LIGHT SENTENCES

## Assaulting Two Little Girls

The *Morning Advertiser* (December 21) reports case of a middle-aged man, charged before Mr. Clarke Hall at Old Street Police Court with assaulting two little girls at a picture palace on a Sunday evening. The magistrate commented on the frequency of these assaults at picture palaces, and said they "must be put a stop to."

Sentence: Fined £3 or a month's imprisonment.

## Cruelty to Children

The *Daily Mail* (December 30) reports case of a carter charged at Nottingham with neglecting his children. It was stated that he beat his eleven-year-old daughter with a stick and a piece of wire rope, and made her sleep in a box with only a sack over her.

Sentence: Three months' imprisonment.

## Attempted Murder

The *Morning Advertiser* (December 9) reports case of a warehouseman indicted before Judge Coleridge at the Central Criminal Court for the attempted murder of his wife by strangling, and of his lodger by inflicting ten wounds with a knife. The defence was that he was jealous of the lodger, with whom his wife had lived for a time. The jury found him guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy.

Sentence: Four months in the second division.

## OUR COMPARISONS

Our table of punishments this week shows rather more forcibly than usual the greater value attached in our courts to property than to human life, even where the persons of little girls are involved. It astonishes us, to begin with, that a magistrate usually so sound in his judgments as Mr. Clarke Hall should have deemed it sufficient to inflict a paltry fine of £3, or in default a month's imprisonment, on a man convicted of assaults on two little girls under cover of darkness in a picture palace. We make all allowances for the meagreness of the Press report, from which it is impossible to gather the nature of the assault, so that we do not know if the maximum sentence to which the offender rendered himself liable was two years' imprisonment or penal servitude for life. But the magistrate's own comment shows that he considered the offence sufficiently serious. "These assaults upon young girls," he is reported to have said, "must be put a stop to. I am afraid they are far too common in picture palaces when the place is in comparative darkness."

## "Far too Common"

Then why fail to point the moral by an adequate sentence? Surely Mr. Clarke Hall is not so great an optimist as to suppose that a month's imprisonment with the option of a £3 fine—thirty pieces of silver for tarnishing the body and soul of each little victim—would convince the offender of the real seriousness of his crime?

Needless to say, we do not recommend heavy sentences as such—like that of eighteen months' imprisonment for obtaining £1 by false pretences. But as long as punishments are given in these unjust proportions, is it surprising that the more serious class of offence should continue to be "far too common"?

## "Provocation"

As our readers know well, we should be the last to criticise any judge for

## HEAVY SENTENCES

## Theft of £1

The *Daily News* (January 5) reports case of a man charged at the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions with obtaining £1 by fraud from a minister. He represented himself as a wounded soldier home from the front (where he had never been, having broken out of a military hospital here while under treatment), and had practised similar frauds on other ministers.

Sentence: Eighteen months' imprisonment.

## Stealing a Pair of Boots

The *Morning Advertiser* (December 24) reports case of a waitress charged at Lambeth Police Court before Mr. Biron with stealing a pair of boots belonging to her mother, and some linen belonging to her married sister. She was said by the police sergeant to be an "absolutely hopeless" case.

Sentence: Three months' hard labour.

## Receiving Stolen Goods

The *Morning Advertiser* (December 17) reports case of a man charged before Judge Atherley Jones at the Central Criminal Court with receiving a quantity of jewellery known to have been stolen. He denied all knowledge of the robbery in question.

Sentence: Three years' penal servitude.

showing leniency when a jury adds to the verdict of guilty a "strong recommendation to mercy," on the grounds of extreme "provocation." We believe that justice would be done with far more certainty, in many cases, if a greater regard were shown for the human aspect of the question and for the extenuating circumstances that exist in nearly every case of crime. But we protest most emphatically against the tendency of judges to pay heed to this recommendation of the jury when it is made with regard to a man who is jealous over a woman, and not to heed it when it is made with regard to a woman who is jealous over a man.

## Mercy—and Penal Servitude

Compare, for instance, the third case in the left-hand column of the above table of punishments with the case of Julia Decies, dealt with in VOTES FOR WOMEN some two years ago. Julia Decies is still undergoing a sentence of seven years' penal servitude for wounding a man who had deserted her once, had just told her brutally he was going to desert her again, and had further infected her with an abominable disease. It is not surprising that on this occasion the jury spoke of "provocation," and recommended her to mercy. Mr. Justice Darling sentenced her to seven years' penal servitude.

Yet, when a man who has so far become reconciled to his wife as to be again living with her, who, moreover, according to the Press account, has actually invited the other man again to become his lodger, and then, overcome by jealousy, does his best to murder them both (very nearly succeeding in the case of the man)—Judge Coleridge listens to the plea of provocation, expresses his approval of it, and gives the man a sentence of four months in the second division! For stealing £1, that man might have got eighteen months.

## Windows versus Human Lives

Judge Coleridge does not, however, always listen to the recommendations

of the jury. In May, 1912, when the jury recommended the W.S.P.U. leaders to mercy on account of the purity of their motives, Judge Coleridge sentenced them promptly to nine months' imprisonment, and provoked a good deal of criticism in the ordinary Press for so doing. But then, they had conspired to break windows, and windows are of more value in this country than the lives of men and women!

## WOMEN IN THE HONOURS' LIST.

The following resolution was unanimously passed at a meeting held under the auspices of the Women's Franchise Society, Hendon, on January 7:—

"This meeting of women desires to thank His Majesty the King for conferring the Kaiser-I-Hind gold medal on four ladies, and on the decoration of the Royal Red Cross given to Miss Macdonald, of the Canadian Nursing Service, and hopes that in all future Honours' Lists the services rendered by women in every part of the Empire will be fully recognised.

"(Signed) EDITH HOW MARTYN,  
"Chairman."

## COMING EVENTS

Mdlle. Marie A. Czaplicka will deliver a lantern lecture on "Poland, Past and Present," at the Ashburton Club, 28, Red Lion Square, W.C., on Monday, January 24, at 7 p.m. Chair: Mrs. Despard. Tickets, 1s. and 6d., can be obtained from the Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn.

The Women's Freedom League will hold a public meeting at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday, January 26, at 3.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard and Miss Nina Boyle. Admission free.

The United Suffragists will hold a

public meeting in the Kingsley Hall, Bristol, on Friday, January 28, at 7.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Mr. Robert Smillie, Miss Catherine Marshall, and Miss Evelyn Sharp. Chair: Mr. George Lansbury. Admission free.

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## THE TAXICAB MUDDLE

## No Licences for Women

In spite of the shortage of taxicab drivers, and in spite of the increasing number of people who are not afraid to trust themselves to a woman driver, Scotland Yard still obstinately refuses to license women. It is of no use to point out that the public want cabs, that the motor-cab companies want drivers, and that women want work—the authorities at Scotland Yard will not listen. The work is not "suitable" for women. All sorts of men hire cabs, and the driver might possibly be subjected to "unpleasantness" from a fare of undesirable character.

It is not suggested that women cannot drive taxicabs. That argument has been torpedoed by the Minister of Munitions, who himself employs a woman to drive his car. Chivalry—the desire to protect women from themselves, against their will—is at the root of Scotland Yard's determination.

## Drunkards not Objected to!

The authorities, however, have no solution of the difficulty to offer, and the managers of motor-cab companies have to make the best of the situation. One enterprising company, according to the *Daily Mail*, has decided to take back men convicted of drunkenness and using bad language to fares.

We have not yet heard what steps

will be taken to protect women-fares from possible "unpleasantness" from drunken and abusive cab-drivers; nor whether we may hope for some slight relaxation of the present Licensing Orders. One company alone has 1,600 idle cabs, and if they are all to be driven by drunkards, the condition of the streets at night will be at least thrilling. A Zeppelin raid will be safe in comparison!

## Suggestions to the Home Office

Some of the objections to this proposal may be removed by prohibiting women from using taxicabs; but even then old and infirm men may be put to grave inconvenience by a powerful and quarrelsome driver who is not drunk enough to be helpless. We cannot help thinking that there are other reserves of labour in the country yet untouched. There are a great many inmates of Deaf and Dumb Asylums who could surely be released for this necessary work? These strike us as specially suitable for the purpose, as their infirmities would render them unconscious of the complaints of the fares, and incapable of using the bad language at present attributed to taxicab drivers. Of course, the situation would not be greatly improved as regards the fares; but what matter? The Home Office would have kept women out of one more lucrative employment, and chivalry would be vindicated!



# VOTES FOR WOMEN

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### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**LANTERN LECTURE** on "Poland, Past and Present," by Mdlle. Marie A. Czaplicka, at the Ashburton Club, 28, Red Lion Square, W.C., Monday, January 24, at 7 p.m. Chairman: Mrs. Despard. Tickets, 1s. and 6d., from the Women's Freedom League offices, 144, High Holborn, W.C.

**THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE** will hold a public meeting every Wednesday afternoon at Caxton Hall, Westminster, 3.30 p.m. Speakers, January 26: Mrs. Despard and Miss Nina Boyle. Admission free.

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